

Dreamland

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Dreamland

by [apricari](#)

Summary

Inspired by a tweet by HigherMagic: “I need one of those AUs where Will had anesthesia and wakes up & Hannibal's there, Will immediately goes on about how beautiful he is & asks him out & goes crazy with joy/cries when Hannibal tells him they're married. Please tell me someone has written it I can't write it myself.”

Unbeta'd.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Slipping Through Dreamland

Three months ago, the decomposing body of a woman had been discovered near Prettyboy, then a dumping ground. Maryland County law enforcement had called the Bureau. That's when the Bureau had called Will.

The bodies were on beds of flowers, all in various stages of rot. Ribbons were tied around their ankles and wrists over the ligature marks they had earned from their struggling; most of the victims had been strangled. Each body was surrounded by an aureola of drug store sentimental, an open coffin of faux fleece teddies, mylar balloons long deflated, trinkets. There were other indicators that whoever placed the bodies had returned to them multiple times. Counting the number of bouquets and stuffed toys gave the BAU an idea of how often the offender visited. Will thought he must stay with the bodies for hours at a time.

"He didn't want anyone to find his friends," Will had told him, late one night their study. He'd been pacing in front of the desk for an hour, flying away. "The gifts weren't for anyone else to see."

"Why did he give them the gifts?"

"It's his way of—of apologizing. To him they're still alive to him, and he knows they don't want him around. That article Lounds wrote is trash," he'd said with sudden venom. "He can't fathom displaying them. He needs to be alone, he needs to hide even from them, even when they're too far gone—" He'd run a hand through his hair, breathing. "They each meant so much to him but they were spread out so far you couldn't see another victim if you were standing next to one. He hates the process and can hardly bear that he needs to product."

Before Hannibal could ask the obvious, Will had given him a fixed look over the rim of his glasses. "Don't listen to Lounds, alright? She just wants wants to draw you out so she can keep...entertaining her readers."

"I am not interested in competition with this killer. I'm only suggesting an alternative."

"You're not usually so pushy," he'd muttered.

"Does this gift-giver not tempt your palate?"

"If you want to discuss what's palatable, we think he's a smoker." At that, Hannibal had only poured another glass of wine.

Will had built his profile: white male, forties. Heavy smoker, owns a home and a truck or van. Lower-middle class, a contractor of some kind. Unmarried, lives alone, no previous run-ins with the law. Forensics had found hair and prints, saliva on the cigarette butts found near one of the scenes, but no match. Sifting through the gifts for what could be tracked was slow progress, but the BAU mapped out a general area of suburbs outside of Baltimore. From there, it had turned into door knocking for samples.

“If I see him, I’ll know,” Will had said. Hannibal had to touch him then. “Jack knows that. You know that.” He’d softened when Hannibal thumbed the tender flesh at the corner of his eye. “That’s how I caught you, isn’t it?”

“You won’t reconsider?”

“I just...don’t think it’s worth the time. Let Jack have this one. There will be others.” Hannibal had built a room in his mind palace for the image he’d made in front of their hearth, light of the fire behind him; the facets of him. His somber tone and the reassurance in his eyes. “There always will be.”

Robert Pritchard was a forty-four year old male who owned a home in Cedonia. He was a licensed electrician and owned a utility van, which he parked in his front driveway. He had married a woman when he was twenty-five, but they divorced after less than a year. Pritchard had never remarried. It would have been the van that would have gotten Will to knock on the front door, Hannibal thought later. He wondered what Pritchard had assumed about Will that made him think letting Will in was a good idea.

Apparently there was a struggle in the parlor. Pritchard bound Will and dragged him to the basement. He pinned Will to the wall and pummeled him repeatedly. When he was close enough, Will latched his teeth to Pritchard’s levator scapulae and wouldn’t be dislodged even as Pritchard continued to beat his torso. After ten seconds, Pritchard finally pried Will away and left him slumped on the floor, covered in Pritchard’s blood.

Rather than call 911, Pritchard took Will’s .22 and shot himself. They knew all this, Jack had told Hannibal over the phone, because Pritchard had security cameras. It had taken Will some time to unbind his hands enough to reach Pritchard’s phone. EMTs had found him on the floor, clutching his abdomen.

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By the time Hannibal arrived at Sheikh Zayed Tower, it was dinner time. He greeted the nurse at the desk with a wan smile. “Still working the evening shift, Marjorie?”

“Oh, hello, Doctor Lecter—he’s all right—ruptured appendix,” she told him, rifling through a stack of forms. “Doctor Kerrigan’s almost done.”

“But he’s progressing well?”

“Oh yes—the rupture was the worst of it, no other internal damage. He’s just got an x-ray, one rib is fractured on the same side. Lots of bruising, but he’s breathing just fine. I didn’t know you were married, Doctor.”

“Only recently.”

She gave him a sympathetic look over a folder. “When my husband had his heart attack, I was terrified out of my mind. Doctor Moser was on call that night, do you remember him? Anyway, Martin told me on the phone during his break, Jim is fine, he’s fine...I just didn’t believe it until I saw him. Kept me up for weeks, listening to him breath...here, your paperwork’s all ready. We’ll come get you when he’s settled.”

She hurried away, leaving him alone. The paperwork was minimal. He found himself impatient to see Will. He did not know of Doctor Kerrigan, but Doctor Kerrigan should hope their work was up to snuff. He put the thought away and occupied himself for a time planning the meals he would bring Will during his stay. He fondly wondered whether Will would be withdrawn or irritable when he learned a week-long hospital stay was before him.

A tall woman in a doctor’s coat approached. “Doctor Lecter? I’m Doctor Kerrigan.” She shook his hand. “I’ll take you to Will’s room.”

As they walked, she launched into a detailed explanation of Will’s state on arrival, the extent of his injuries, and the surgery. “It went very well, no complications,” she assured. “We’d like him to stay for at least a week for the laparotomy and to keep an eye on that rib. I’m referring him to Doctor Rumrich for post care. He’ll meet with Will tomorrow.”

She was well-mannered and competent, qualities he would find more appreciation for if her patient had been anyone other than Will. When he expressed his gratitude, he found it was genuine. Somehow it existed in him while he contemplated how he might placate Will after having Doctor Kerrigan for dinner without discussing it with him first.

He did not allow himself to ruminate on the latter, reminding himself it was nearly always more difficult to mollify the real Will than the version of him that existed in his head. Instead he considered himself as he walked with Doctor Kerrigan through the post-op ward. These new dichotomies his boy made him feel. There was possessiveness, he noted, comparing the other times he had identifiably felt possessive of Will—and yet, when paired with his present gratitude...

As soon as they reached Will’s room, and he caught the slightest trace of Will’s scent beyond the door, the thought was immediately put to the back of his mind.

“I’ll let you go. Contact us anytime.” Doctor Kerrigan shook his hand again. “Take care now.”

“You as well, Doctor Kerrigan. Thank you again.”

He seemed to be asleep when Hannibal entered. Marjorie was there, finishing up.

“His personal items are over in that bag on the table, Doctor,” she said. “I’m afraid his clothes didn’t make it. Spare pillow and blanket too if you’d like to get some rest...just ring us if he needs us.”

“Thank you, Marjorie, you’ve been wonderful.” She had already pulled a chair up to the bed for him.

“Of course, Doctor Lecter...” Her voice trailed into the hall as she closed the door behind her.

He remained by the door and watched Will sleep for a length of time he did not bother to measure. Then he set himself into motion again.

He dimmed the ceiling lights and put the overnight bag he’d brought on the table. Beyond the window, the sky above Butcher’s Hill was plum, with a lingering stripe of orange; he closed the shade. Will had left him for door-knocking only twelve hours ago. He checked his phone, put-out with how it had been buzzing in his pocket. A voicemail from Jack which he disregarded. A string of texts from Agent Katz, asking after Will’s health and requesting to let Will know they were wrapping up the case, no need to worry. Two other voicemails from patients whose appointments he’d cancelled, agreeing to meet at their usual times next week. He tucked them all into the overnight bag and turned toward the chair.

A gleam caught his eye. Will was awake, and watching him, face still and eyes barely open. When Hannibal moved to sit, a sleepy grin spread on his face. “Well hello, stranger.”

For such cold eyes, they warmed him. The only thing that kept Hannibal from reaching for him was the knowledge that Will must be in some pain. “Hello, darling.”

“Did the nurse let you in here?” His words were slow and lazy; the accent that only otherwise surfaced when he was drunk. *Loosiana*. The sedatives still wearing off. Hannibal gave him a smile.

“She would have been hard pressed to keep me out. I was determined to see you, chéri. I came as quickly as I could.”

“Lucky me,” said Will. He was looking Hannibal over—then he went a bit shy. “You with anyone?”

Concerned about facing Jack, Hannibal surmised. He would have his way that Will wouldn’t see Jack until he left this hospital. “It’s only myself here tonight.”

That made Will smile again, relieved. “Oh, good,” he sighed. “Jesus. It would’ve broken my heart, if you’d said you were taken.”

Hannibal stalled in his surprise as Will wriggled, trying to sit up more. “No moving now, my dear...”

“Yeah, come closer.” Moving nearer to the bed made him stop shifting. Now all his attention was on Hannibal. “I wanna see you. *Jesus*,” he said again. “Look at you. What’s your name?”

It clicked, then, as he recalled the cocktail of drugs Doctor Kerrigan had mixed for him, and their side effects.

“My name is Hannibal,” he told Will.

“You sure it’s not Adonis?”

Shock made him smile, and he had to look away. He felt suddenly, unprecedentedly warm. Will had never looked at him with the particular brightness in his eyes now. He'd never seen Will so brazenly flirt, either. Not like this. Jesus, was right.

"Look up here for me, won't you, handsome?"

He had to look back, then. Eye contact was not always bestowed even in their married life. Will once told him it was to keep his head on straight. Just as well; Will's stare could hypnotize. He lost track of how long they stared into one another, in the dim hospital room.

"Rubies in your eyes," Will murmured. He looked away first. "You're something else."

"Am I."

"You're gorgeous." Such a toothy grin as he said it. "What're you doing around me, looking like you do?"

"You're gorgeous, too."

"Ah shit, not me." He tried to rub at one eye with the back of the same hand stuck with the IV cannula. Hannibal grabbed his wrist and pulled it away gently. "Sorry, sugar," Will mumbled. His head tilted to watch Hannibal turn over his arm.

His wrists were ringed red with friction burn. Hannibal touched the mark with just the tips of his fingers. It hadn't broken the skin, but it would hurt for some time.

"You're alone?" Will asked quietly. He was staring at the corner of his bed.

"I'm with you."

"Well, I'd like to keep you." Will's fingers twitched. "I'd love to take you somewhere."

He couldn't keep it up after that. "I'm married."

"Oh." Will's face fell. "But you said..."

"Will, darling," Hannibal said, "I'm your husband."

He turned his hand over to show Will his wedding band. Will stared for seconds, then touched it as if to check it was real. Then he looked at his own hand. "Where's mine?"

Hannibal left him for the cloth bag containing his personal effects. The ring and chain had been tucked inside his wallet. He'd watched Will put it on that morning. He returned to the bed, took Will's hand again; he didn't miss the short intake of breath as he slipped the ring on his finger.

"You're mine, huh?"

"Yes, darling."

“You’re my man,” said Will, almost to himself. Something in his face adjusted, a muscle between the corner of his eye and his nose, and Hannibal wanted desperately to look into the eye of Will’s mind, to see what he was seeing in this state. There was no questioning, no suspicion or inspection...

He lost the thought entirely when Will touched his face.

“You’re like looking at a dream. Can I kiss you?” A thumb traced his cheek; his other hand brushed his hair back. “Please? We kiss, right?”

He had the sudden, absurd notion that it was himself who was dreaming. There was a new, strange ache in him he did not identify before he told Will, “Of course you can kiss me.”

“Come here,” Will said. He grabbed Hannibal’s jacket sleeve and pulled. “Please?”

Hannibal surrendered then. He leaned in—Will’s lips were soft against the corner of his mouth, beard rough against his cheek. It was more a smear of skin than a kiss, like trying to blend into one. Fingers in his hair. One of Will’s hands cupped the back of his head and held him where he wanted him, with unexpected demand. There was damp on his face and Hannibal wasn’t sure the tears weren’t his. Their foreheads pressed together before Will let him back enough to see his eyes.

“You’re gonna stay with me, right?”

“Yes, Will.”

“Yes,” Will echoed. He smiled. “Yes. Oh, honey.”

Before there was no chance of going back, he pried Will’s hands away—said “Be patient, my love,” to Will’s disappointed sound—and left the bed to remove his jacket. The moment he was within reach again, Will’s hands were on him, tugging. He laid next to Will carefully, on his better side, and instantly Will curled into him, head against his shoulder, nose nuzzling his throat, levering himself into a position that had them pressed together in the small bed. It was so intensely good Hannibal allowed himself the sigh that came to him, to forget himself for a moment and bask in what this gentle Will was giving.

In the past, Will had allowed him his pet names and touches; he had never shied away. In rare moments he would reciprocate in his own way, standing within reach, leaning in to his touch, hums and pleased expressions. How sweet Will was this way—drugged, Hannibal considered. And so affectionate. The kisses peppering his neck were soft, loving and chaste. When Hannibal swallowed, the motion drew Will to his Adam’s apple.

“Will.”

But Will didn’t stop. He kissed, breath puffing against his neck, humming low a sound Hannibal could feel in his trachea.

“Will,” he said again.

“Hmmm?”

“Tell me how you feel.”

“You feel good.”

“Enough now—are you comfortable?”

“You’re precious,” Will said. “Worrying about me. You must be a good husband.”

Of course Will would know his disposition before he could find the words. “For you, of course,” he said, almost to himself. Will let out a small expletive, stretching too far for his hand. “Be still now, sweet boy, no more of this...”

There was a polite knock at the door, and then it opened. A bouquet of white lilies preceded Agent Beverly Katz through the door. She froze with one hand on the knob.

“Whoops. Bad time?”

“It’s alright, Agent Katz.” It was not. He reminded himself that in any other situation, he found Agent Katz to be a fine person—Will liked her. Even if he didn’t recognize her now.

“Come in,” he spoke rather loud. “Are you my doctor?”

“Uh—“

“This is my husband.” Will must make quite the picture, slumped as he was against his shoulder, reaching with one languid hand to pet the side of his husband’s face, with calling in a gloating tone from his bed. “It’s nice to meet you.”

The surprise registered on Agent Katz’ face. She seemed torn between honesty and playing along before she chose the neutral, “Just came to check you were doing okay.”

“Thank you, Agent Katz, he’ll be fine soon enough.”

“Thank you for the flowers, Doctor—have you met my husband?”

“I’ll just put these here.” She set the bouquet next to the bags and retreated, though he caught her grin. “Feel better, Will—Doctor Lecter—“

She shut the door behind her. Not a moment later, there was another knock.

Marjorie, this time. “Still awake?” she tsked.

“He’s stubborn.”

“He’s a tough one, too, staying up this long.” She was already at work.

“Ma’am, have you met my husband?”

“Yes, I have.”

“Could you believe it? That I found me a man like this.” He was less fidgety, but his hand continued to roam where he could reach before Hannibal caught it, and held on. Marjorie hummed, busy. Will prattled on. “He’s so sweet, too, loving on me to make me feel better. So fucking handsome,” he sighed, and Hannibal had never seen him so sweet. “Aren’t I a lucky guy?”

Marjorie gave him a small twist of a smile. “Get some rest, Agent Graham.”

He returned the smile reflexively. Like dusting sleep sand in his eyes, he closed them, dozy. “‘Night, ma’am.”

Marjorie cleaned up, nodded to Hannibal, and left. Will was already asleep by the time she closed the door. Hannibal allowed himself to relax, closed his eyes to feel the weight of Will’s body against his. For his own sake he put away the notion that he might not feel this again. He kept his attention on the warmth of him, the motion of his breathing as he fell asleep, all the ways they were touching, and committed the sensations to memory. They stayed with him as he dreamed.

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“Christ.”

Hannibal woke to the gravelly sound of Will’s voice and the feeling of Will shifting against him. They were still pressed together, Will’s head against his shoulder. The sunlight was weak, filtered grey through the shade. It must be very early morning.

“Hello, my creature.”

Will snorted softly against his collar. “Who let you up here?”

“You did. How are you?”

“Tired. And sore.”

“I’ll call the nurse.”

“Not yet,” Will said quietly. “When did you get here?”

“Shortly after your appendectomy was finished.”

“Of all the stupid shit,” Will muttered. He rolled a bit, glancing around the room. “Who brought the flowers?”

“Agent Katz.”

“What happened with Pritchard?”

“She didn’t say. But she did ask me to tell you not to think about the case. They’re taking care of it.”

For a moment Hannibal heard only the muted sounds of the ward beyond the door. “Did Jack tell you what happened?”

“Yes,” Hannibal said into his hair. “I shivered when I heard. You survived with just your teeth, my love.” Will didn’t move, didn’t speak. Hannibal pressed his lips to his temple, and it put him in mind of kissing an idol. “I am in awe of you.”

“You’re rubbing off on me. He tasted like tar.”

Hannibal laughed, low in his chest. He stroked Will’s arm where he could reach, the barest brush of his fingers, until he could feel goose flesh. “Jack said there was video.”

“Lecher.”

“I can imagine it, but I’d beg to see the real thing.” Will’s fingers curled, grasping his shirt. “If I ask nicely, would you get it for me?”

Will didn’t answer. It wasn’t a no. The quality of his silence made Hannibal suspect it wouldn’t end up a yes. He wondered what images Will’s mind was showing him about Pritchard now.

Now his hand was smoothing Hannibal’s shirt despite all the other wrinkles from having slept in it. It reminded Hannibal of last night, before Will had been put to sleep. Will as close as he could get, hands on him and saying his sweet words. He sat with the knowledge that Will had simply been drugged at the time; it was at odds with how they were tangled now, how Will stroked with a steady hand.

Touch me all you like, Hannibal wanted to tell him.

“Thought you’d be ticked off,” said Will suddenly. He’d been quiet for so long Hannibal had thought he was dozing. “Someone took a piece of me, even if it was vestigial.”

“I asked the surgeon to put it in a jar.”

“You did not.”

Hannibal smiled. “My focus is on you, Will, not your coincidental surgeon. I’m more relieved you’re here with me than I dislike you having been worked on,” he said, “by someone other than myself.”

“She got me back to you, didn’t she?” Will told him anyway. “She was kind enough. Uh—from what I remember. Don’t hurt her. Alright?”

“As you wish,” he murmured. “What do you remember?”

“A lot of pain while I was on the phone. Getting here. I was in and out by the time I met the surgeon.”

“You woke up when I came into your room.”

“I don’t remember that.”

“You didn’t remember me.”

Will lifted his head to see Hannibal’s face. His cheek was red where it had been pressed against his shoulder. “No?”

“You were still high from the sedatives.”

“Was I as rude to you as I was on the day we met, or worse?”

“You were flirtatious. When I told you we’re married, you wept.” The more Hannibal curled his lips into a smile, the more Will furrowed his brow. “Don’t frown, my dear. You were perfectly charming.”

“I don’t know if I believe you,” Will said, in a contrary tone. His ears were pink.

“Ask Agent Katz.”

Will huffed and settled his head back down. “Well, don’t tell me about it. I’m sure I’ll hear it from her.” He shifted his legs, voice somehow gruff and soft. “You could have gotten up, you know. Probably wouldn’t have woken me up.”

“You wanted me here, at the time.” He licked his lips. “If I overstepped in my indulging you, then you must tell me.”

“I would have. By now. You know that.”

“You are never vague when you set your boundaries,” Hannibal agreed. “But I was referring to the rooms you construct to contain parts of yourself. I wander your halls but I can only hope to know what’s inside them. What they hide are mysteries until you open the doors.”

“Until you politely manipulate me to invite you inside, actually. Unless I label the doors. In the meantime you listen through the cracks,” Will muttered. “You go around the back and peep through the shades.”

“You have sometimes left them open on purpose.”

“Fuck off,” Will said under his breath.

“You’ve put me in my place before. Yesterday, you put me here.”

“Under the influence?”

“So to speak. Unable as I am to say no to you, I do not wish to cross thresholds without your invitation.”

“You’re not a vampire, Hannibal. If you’re going to snitch on yourself, just tell me what happened.”

“You were seeking physical contact—you were quite affectionate. Once I was within your reach, you held and kissed me. You touched me,” Hannibal said softly, “without reserve. You wanted to, and so you did.”

Will was quiet for long enough that Hannibal could not begin to guess his response. He wished he could see his eyes now. There was no tension in his body. Hannibal did not have Will’s sensitivity, he could not feel Will’s mood—he wondered if he would say it was the drugs or—

“Did you like it?”

“Yes,” Hannibal said immediately.

“Would you—want that?”

“Will,” was all he could say.

“You like to touch me. I know that. You seemed fine with the way things were.”

“I am. I would be.”

“You do want me to touch you? Like you touch me?”

“Yes, Will. You must understand—“ He swallowed. It was becoming clear to him now. “I did not desire reciprocation until the possibility arose that you were holding a part of yourself back. I want all of you, Will. I’ll take all you see fit to give me.”

He stared at the eggshell ceiling. They were clutching at each other. Hannibal smelled the cloying fragrance of the lilies, sterile hospital, their bodies, and Will’s mind at work.

“You know most people have this part figured out before they get hitched?”

Hannibal caught the trace of dry humor. “We’re old-fashioned.”

Will laughed, then groaned. “Don’t,” he said when Hannibal reached for the call button. “Not yet.”

Instead, he adjusted slowly, fitting them together, until his nose was pressed to Hannibal’s throat. Hannibal closed his eyes against how good it felt.

“I’ve had my head against this door for a while,” said Will. “There’s a fire on the other side.”

Hannibal drew in a breath Will must feel with his mouth. “You must know I would wait.”

“Oh, I know that,” said Will. “I just have to brave the handle.”

Lemongrass Eyelids

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Two weeks,” said Hannibal.

“Two *more* weeks.”

“Yes, my love, two more weeks without Jack or your work or anyone at all but me.”

Will was quiet, although he kept his hold on Hannibal’s arm as they walked up the front steps of their Baltimore home. The moment the door opened, Ruby rushed up to Will, wagging tail shaking her whole body. Will’s entire mood changed.

“That’s it, that’s it, I’m right here...silly Ruby, calm down, that’s a girl. Did you miss me?” Ruby whined. Will bent carefully to pet her. She butted against his legs and panted happily.

“Quite enough,” said Hannibal, minding Will as he stood up straight again.

“Sit, Ruby.”

Obediently she did, but followed them into study. Will sat on the chaise with a slow exhale. “She needs a walk.”

“I will take her. When I return I shall make us both dinner...would you like to rest here?”

“I’m fine,” said Will, “I’ll wash up while you’re gone.”

When Hannibal returned, he let Ruby off her leash and wet to the study, Will had fallen asleep on the chaise.

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He was asleep when Hannibal went to wake him in his room in the morning. Will stirred as Hannibal approached the bed.

“I came to ask what you might want for breakfast.”

“I get to choose?” Will said, fuzzy with sleep.

“Only while you’re bedridden.”

Will hummed and seemed to consider. He surprised Hannibal when he said, “Come over here.”

Hannibal did as he was asked. Will shifted. “Lay down with me.”

Here was a space he had never entered before. He slid slowly under the covers and was enveloped in Will's scent, sheets warmed by his body.

Will sighed softly as he settled on his good side. His bruises were fading yellow at the edges. Hannibal thought, how much he loved his face; his nose, his eyelashes, the bow of his lips.

"How are you, Will?"

"Tired. I thought about taking Ruby for her walk but I don't want to get up."

"There's no need. I will walk Ruby and I'll bring your food here."

"Don't spoil me," Will said in a serious tone, but his eyes danced. "I'll be asking for breakfast in bed every morning."

"I hope you do."

Will grinned, and Hannibal wouldn't deny himself. He cupped Will's face, thumb gently pressing at the corner of his mouth. Will closed his eyes.

"Feels good," he said.

"Yes," said Hannibal, unthinkingly.

"You touch me a lot," he said, sounding on the verge of sleep. His lips brushed Hannibal's thumb as he spoke. "You wanted to even before we were married. I could tell."

"Could you," Hannibal murmured.

"You touch me to indulge yourself, when you're feeling...covetous."

"Cherishing."

Will's eyes lit on him. Not so sleepy now. "Like a miser with a jewel."

"You are precious to me. You do shine."

"Cold and hard."

Hannibal took his hand. "Many faceted. Beautiful."

"Just for show?"

"I'd keep you hidden away forever, but your brilliance demands admiration."

"A rock and a hard place."

Hannibal feigned being appalled, and it worked to break Will's straight face and send him laughing. The beauty of the moment struck Hannibal: Will smiling, shrouded in his cream-colored sheets, lit by the morning. He etched it in his mind to draw later.

Will's hand shifted in his, holding his fingers. When he looked up, they stared at each other.

"Don't move," said Will. He traced his finger over the ridge of his knuckles with his thumb. Such a soft, small touch, the lightest contact.

"I keep thinking of what you would do," said Will. "How you would touch me."

"Touch me how you want," he said. "Don't think of how I would touch you."

He had the urge, again, to touch Will's face. He drew in a breath when Will brushed his fingers brushed Hannibal's fringe from his temple, around the curve of his ear. His fingertips came to rest on the tender skin of his neck just behind his jawbone. And then again.

"Hard to do it any different when you're like this." He was so close now. "You don't react this way for anyone else, not even close. You never have."

Hannibal's neck twitched his head into the palm of Will's hand without his permission. He closed his eyes, breathed in. Memorized the nature of Will's touch—covetous. Possessive but gentle. His own want reflected back, as if Will wanted for him as he wanted for Will. And Will already had him.

When Hannibal opened his eyes, the shadows in Will's room had barely moved, but it felt like they had been there in Will's bed for hours. Will was petting the collar of Hannibal's robe. His breathing had evened out, as if he was in a kind of trance.

"Will," said Hannibal.

"Mm." He was entirely focused on the rub of the fabric under his hand. Hannibal felt the warmth of his hand against his chest.

"It's nearly time for your medication. I must make you something to eat."

Will let him get up. He watched as Hannibal opened the window by the bed and adjusted the blinds.

"I'll bring your breakfast. If you need anything at all today, you must call me."

"I won't need to call you. I'll be fine"

"Humor me, please. I'll be only a short drive away." He reached the door.

"Hannibal?"

He turned. Will was sitting up in bed, propped on his hands, with a sleepy look. "Never mind."

Hannibal inclined his head and walked out.

Throughout the day, Hannibal minded his clients, ushering them in and out of his office with his usual efficiency. A part of him remained in Will's room, under his sheets. Warm hands touching. He could make the desperate move of cancelling his remaining appointments and going back to Will.

Instead, between appointments, he sketched Will as he had seen him that morning. In bed, smiling.

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When Hannibal arrived home, Will was just leaving the study, Ruby at his heels.

"Hey," he said, with a small smile. "Your day was good?"

"Better now that I'm home with you. What are you doing out of bed?"

"I want to help with dinner," Will said.

Hannibal couldn't deny him anything, so he instructed Will on the *mise en place* for the night's meal and went to put his things away. When he returned the kitchen smelled of fresh herbs and garlic.

"You were alright on the stairs?"

"I'm not china," said Will, without heat. He passed Hannibal a glass of wine. Hannibal sniffed it and smiled; Will had chosen an excellent vintage to pair with dinner.

"No, you're not. How was your day?"

"Quiet here with just me and Ruby."

Hannibal busied himself with washing vegetables. "Ruby is an even worse conversationalist than yourself, I agree."

"I sort of liked it. No chatter. Coming behind you."

A hand touched Hannibal's waist, just at his apron, mindful not to get sticky on his clothes. Will maneuvered past him for the sink to wash his hands.

"You walked her earlier." He smelled faintly earthy, grass and fresh air.

"Yeah, an hour or so ago."

"You're not feeling tired?"

"I'm fine. Jack came by today."

"You spoke with him?"

"I made him a cup of coffee and we talked. Hair and prints match." He dried his hands. "He wants me to finish my profile."

“And you told him you’re on medical leave, I hope.”

“I told him it was smart to come by when you weren’t here.”

“And?”

“Yes, mamma,” said Will, voice low.

Hannibal grinned at him. “You didn’t call me that in the hospital.”

“Oh?” Will ducked his head.

“Only sweet endearments. ‘Honey’ and ‘Sugar.’”

“Original.”

“You told me I was gorgeous and informed the nurse I was ‘fucking handsome.’”

“Christ,” Will uttered.

“You asked if my name was Adonis.”

“I’m sorry, alright?”

“You said I was your man,” said Hannibal. Will’s ears turned scarlet. “And you have nothing to apologize for. I am your husband, Will. Call me whatever pleases you.”

“Dinner,” said Will, and Hannibal smiled.

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After washing up, they retired to the study as they usually did. Hannibal poured them brandy, and played Will some music. Will lit a fire, then sank down onto the sofa with a sigh.

“Perhaps you should retire early,” Hannibal hedged.

“It’s not that.”

“Tell me, dear.”

“I was thinking about Pritchard.” Hannibal sniffed a bit. Will didn’t seem to notice. “Jack wants me to go back to that house.”

“Pictures won’t suffice?”

“It’s not like being at the real thing.”

“Your profile included that the killer owned a home. What did he do with the space?”

“He’s got a basement too,” said Will pointedly.

“The bodies were not mutilated.”

“I saw a tub down there. He cleaned the bodies,” Will said. His eyes went a bit glassy. “Like a home funeral. Washed the clothes. I should tell Jack to check for hair. It was lucky he had a basement.” His lips twitched. “But it’s not why he bought the house.”

“Buying a house for the basement is not a crime,” said Hannibal primly.

Will stood and walked to the harpsichord, sipping his brandy.

“He was lonely,” he said. “Looking for companionship. But he thought he should be alone.”

“Are you implying something, Will?”

“You thought you should be alone because you thought yourself peerless,” said Will, mouth in a slightly twisted smile. “He was looking for companionship anywhere he could find it. Lounds didn’t take her comparison of you and Pritchard that far.”

“She will never know me like you do.”

“I think all she’d like to know at this point is where the Ripper has gone.”

“The Ripper has retired,” said Hannibal. He trailed the song off. “But I have not.”

“Nemesis. How’s that for an endearment?”

“The agent of my downfall? Certainly. But you are not my rival, darling. You are my husband.”

“Yes,” said Will. He put his brandy down and sat next to Hannibal at the harpsichord. Close together; Hannibal could feel Will’s body heat.

“Precious thing,” Hannibal told him. “I have thought about you all day.”

“You said I kissed you in the hospital.”

“Yes. You asked me if you could,” said Hannibal. “You said please.”

“Please?”

“Yes.”

“Please,” Will murmured again, yes, Hannibal heard himself breathe, before they kissed.

It was much more of a kiss than their first, a careful press of lips and a soft, lovely sound. Hands cradled his face and tip their heads until the angle was perfect.

“My love,” Hannibal whispered.

Will kissed him again, deep. Fingers threaded through his hair and held on, making him gasp into Will’s mouth. It was so much more contact than they’d had, close and intimate. It made

Hannibal forget the room around them until they parted for breath, and the crackle of the fire came back to him.

“Not so thoroughly as that,” he murmured.

“Give me a break.”

“I’d rather you take what you want.”

“Still trying to brave that handle.”

“I admire your courage,” said Hannibal.

“Do you want sex?”

Hannibal sat very still.

“With me, I mean. Not now.”

“Do you?”

“Aren’t there things you want independent of what I want?”

“In this matter, no. I want to give you what you want. If what you want is nothing, I would honor that.”

“Wanting what I want and wanting me are different things,” said Will quietly.

“I told you, love—I want all of you.”

Hannibal felt the warmth of Will’s cheek pressed against his own. The fire crackled.

“You remember when I asked you to marry me,” said Will finally.

“Of course I do.”

“I’ve never been with a man. I hadn’t thought about it much before you.”

“But you have thought about it. With me.”

“You touch me a lot,” Will reminded him.

“Have I been inappropriate? Suggestive?”

“I can’t believe we’re still talking,” Will said under his breath.

“May I touch you now?”

“Suggestively?”

“...perhaps you should lead.”

Will looked him in the eye. "I know how to tell you to stop."

They stared each other down for a handful of seconds, and it was Will who broke first; he laughed in his understated way, gruff and quiet. "You too."

"Married we may be, but I admit," said Hannibal with his own apprehensive smile, "I cannot bear the thought of doing anything that might compel you to leave me."

"Still waiting for me to open the door."

"What makes you hesitate?" Hannibal took his hand.

Will kissed him. It was luxuriously slow, open mouthed; Will was hot under his hands, through his clothes. He turned, trying to get closer on the bench, until Hannibal took his legs and pulled him carefully half into his lap.

"Fuck," said Will. Hannibal understood perfectly. "I thought about asking you this morning. If you wanted sex."

"Is that why you asked me to lie with you?"

"I didn't know if I wanted it. I just wanted to..."

"To what?"

"Touch you more."

"Touch me as much as you like," Hannibal told him finally. "However you'd like, Will."

Will kissed him. Hannibal lost track of how long they kissed, sharing breath, reaching for each other. Feeling Will with his hands, new places to him; the notch of Will's waist, the small of his back, the curve of his spine. Will exploring too, hands running over Hannibal's chest and down his stomach. Will was starting to move in his lap.

"Will," he said. "Slow down."

"Changed your mind?"

"I'm only considering your incision."

"Easing into this," Will muttered with a laugh. "We're married. Murdered together. Now that we've got here we've got to take this slow?"

"You're healing."

"Then why don't we move somewhere more comfortable?"

"If you like."

Will got up. Hannibal closed the lid of the harpsichord and as soon as he stood, Will took his hand. "C'mon."

He took them back to his room. Will kissed him in the doorway, hands running over his shoulders.

“You feel good,” said Will, like a confession. It made Hannibal swallow. “I want...” He unbuttoned Hannibal’s waistcoat, and Hannibal felt them pass a threshold.

“Keep going.”

“I get to do all the work?” Will said, even as he unknotted Hannibal’s tie. They strip out of their shirts, hands tangling for each other’s buttons. Finally, contact. It was as though the sensation of touching another person’s bare skin was new again. As though he’d never touched another person before Will.

Not this way, he thought, as Will traced a finger down the center of his chest. Not with all their love between them. Will’s skin was covered in goose flesh. His husband, he thought, leaning in to kiss Will. This was his husband.

Hannibal removed his slacks and Will his and Will pulled him into bed. They curled together like they had in the hospital, but without layers of clothing in the way. Will sighed as he pressed his cheek to Hannibal’s shoulder.

“Will. Are you comfortable?”

“Yeah. I’m...” he turned his head in, lips brushing Hannibal’s collarbone. “You feel good,” he said again.

Hannibal buried his nose in Will’s hair. After a still moment, Will traced his hand up and down Hannibal’s side, skin on skin, and Hannibal breathed deep.

“I don’t want sex right now,” said Will. “I just want this. For a while.”

“Yes, Will.”

“It feels too good to move on.”

“Something as simple as contact.”

“Doesn’t feel simple. Fuck.”

They moved at the same time for a kiss. Hannibal heard a song in his mind. As ever, Will moved him. Anything this boy wants, he thought, he will have.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again to HigherMagic for the tweet that inspired all this!

If you'd like to send me a prompt, you can find me on twitter @apricarimy. DMs are open or you can reply to the pinned tweet.

End Notes

If you like this AU, please check out Separately to a Wood by emungere, in which Hannibal proposes to Will halfway through episode 1—a wonderful read which partly inspired this fic.

Works inspired by this one

[Podfic] [Dreamland](#) by [voxxmxchina](#)

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